

John “Jack” Hansen bought this corner lot, and in 1927 built the station. Another person who helped guide the company through its many years of success was Mrs. Lyle (Beulah) Wolline, who started with the company as bookkeeper in January 1936, became involved with all aspects of the business, became manager when Mr. Hansen died in 1954 and owner when Mrs. Hansen died in 1986. No architectural change has been made since the station was built. Some hope that the station property will eventually be developed as an historic site with gas pumps, lights, accessories, etc., of the era. (N42° 40’ 50.2212” W88° 16’ 41.9196”) Adjacent to the Downtown, Reineman’s True Value Hardware carries one of the oldest names in the Burlington business area. William F. Reineman started in the hardware business on Pine Street in 1906 with a carload of fancy Bement cooking ranges which pretty well crowded his store’s 20 x 40 foot interior. What would he think of the diversity of goods now being sold! (N42° 40’ 47.892” W88° 16’ 45.0876”)

16. **PLAZA THEATRE.** Across Milwaukee Avenue from Reineman’s is the Plaza Theatre which opened in February 1928 offering both movies and vaudeville acts. In its early years, the Plaza was leased to a Milwaukee company, which also leased Burlington’s other two theaters – the Orpheum and the Crystal. After operating for several months, the Plaza was closed from November 4, 1928, until April 6, 1929, since there was not enough business for it and the nearby Orpheum (which burned down in January 1930). Air conditioning was installed in the Plaza in 1938, and a new display canopy was put up in 1941. In 1998 the building was converted into a four-theater complex, at which time the facade was returned to about what it was when the theater opened in 1928. (N42° 40’ 46.5636” W88° 16’ 40.4472”)

17. **THE JONES HOUSE.** A large, wood-frame hotel was built on the south corner of Chestnut Street and Milwaukee Avenue by Pliny Perkins and Hugh McLaughlin in 1839, only four years after the first settler built a log cabin for his shelter. It became, in 1845, the favorite place to watch the exciting arrival and departure of the stage coach running from Racine to Janesville. Charles Jones moved the wooden building in 1874 and replaced it with a three-story brick hotel building, the renowned “Jones House.” The name “Jones Block” can still be seen on the Chestnut Street face of an adjacent building. Succeeding hotel owners changed the name to the Fritz-Karl Hotel, then the Badger Hotel, and finally the Coach Lamp. In 1968, fire destroyed the upper stories, after which hotel rooms were discontinued and the whole first floor became Coach’s Sports Bar and Grill (no longer operating). (N42° 40’ 47.6652” W88° 16’ 38.91”)

18. **CHESTNUT STREET BEND.** From the beginning, the bend in Chestnut Street between Milwaukee Avenue and Pine Street has been the center of Burlington. Note the roof lines, the ornate cornices, attesting to the over-a-century age of the buildings. Clothing stores, drug stores, jewelers, and notion stores have played a game of musical chairs over the years, changing ownerships and locations but always there. At one time there were four well patronized saloons in this one block. They’re gone now, but others are still available on surrounding streets. The Meinhardt Bank building, now occupied by Chase Bank, is the oldest building in the state built for and still used as a bank. Although remodeled and extended to twice its width in 1948, it still retains the original design and red brick texture of the building built by Caleb Barns in 1848 for his law office and banking business. As the Meinhardt Bank, privately owned by the Meinhardt family, it served the community from 1891 to 1969 when it became part of a banking chain. (N42° 40’ 47.3232” W88° 16’ 35.6628”)

19. **PINE STREET.** Kittycorner across the street from Chase Bank stands the May’s Insurance building, built in 1909 by C. B. McCanna for his Bank of Burlington. On the site before then stood Laske’s Veteran’s Saloon, a substantial, 2-story brick building. To make way for the bank, the saloon building, which shared a wall with an adjacent building and that side of which had to be shored up with heavy timbers, was moved, using beams, wood rollers, horses, ropes and windlass, down the hill and over the railroad tracks to the property now occupied by the Charcoal Grill. It was a major engineering feat of the day. Two doors northwest at 532 N. Pine Street, John Pennington Mather, in 1865, built his Exchange Hotel, a frame building until 1902 when it was replaced by a modern, brick Hotel Burlington, a very popular pub and hotel until travelers more frequently stayed at motels. A bar and lounge occupied the first floor, with the hotel rooms converted to apartments on the other floors. Pine Street south to Wehmhoff Square echoes to the names of historic merchants: Wien’s Clothing Store was at 492; Itzin’s Harness Shop at 436; Rein’s Meat Market at 428; Rosenberg’s Department Store and Montgomery Wards at 425; Roensing Furniture at 401; and the Western Union Hotel at 400. The building at 388 N. Pine was at one time owned jointly by the city and town of Burlington. City council meetings were held on the first floor. The city library on the second floor

doubled as the town meeting room. The rear of the building housed the fire equipment, and a one-celled city jail. The head of the three-man police force was Chief Beller, who needed only a billy club to keep law and order. (N42° 40’ 48.6876” W88° 16’ 35.1228”)

20. **WEHMHOFF SQUARE.** In 1839, at the government land sale, Silas Peck bought the section of land on which the original part of Burlington was to be built. He had it surveyed and platted, setting aside the entire block enclosed by Pine, Washington, Dodge, and Jefferson streets for a park. Village fathers neglected to establish a park, and the block reverted to Peck’s descendants, who divided it into lots. The gift of E. John Wehmhoff and his sisters Emma, Gertrude, and Frieda received better treatment. Their home stood on the present park site. After their deaths, their wish that the home be removed and the grounds developed as a park were carried out. A plaque explains their gift. Walking toward the Perkins Boulevard side of the square brings you to Pioneer Cabin, owned and furnished by the Burlington Historical Society, and to the Vintage Gardens surrounding the cabin, which were planted and are maintained by the Racine/Kenosha Master Gardeners Association. The cabin is open on Thursdays during the Farmers Market and from 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturdays from mid-May to mid-October. Walking south toward Jefferson Street brings you back to the museum, completing the first loop of the tour. Stop and rest if you wish at the Legacy Garden beside the museum. The Burlington Area Garden Club created and maintains this Garden. (N42° 40’ 44.2128” W88° 16’ 33.8664”)

21. **JEFFERSON STREET.** Going west on Jefferson Street, you find at the corner of Kane the beautifully proportioned Church of the Nazarene. Built about 1853 by Unitarians, Baptists, and Methodists, it was first called the Union Free Church. It was bought in 1923 by a Lutheran congregation and was remodeled in 1939. Across the corner, at 225 N. Kane, stands another architectural gem, the grand wood-frame home built by Charles Jones of the Jones House hotel. The number of these elaborate Victorian homes has diminished over the years, but several can still be seen around the city. Following Jefferson Street west toward St. Mary’s, notice a number of stone buildings, especially the houses at 200, 208, and 216 Jefferson Street. Fieldstone construction was popular in the 1850s. The material was right at hand – or underfoot! Glaciers had left a limitless deposit of boulders large and small, and the underlying bedrock of limestone could be burned in lime kilns for mortar. (N42° 40’ 40.2276” W88° 16’ 38.91”)

22. **HILLSIDE.** At the intersection of Jefferson and McHenry Streets and Milwaukee Avenue, the Hillside was for many years a neighborhood shopping area. A grocery store, a meat market, and the Log Cabin tavern fronted on Jefferson Street. The corner building originally served as a Catholic school. The building in the triangle, which houses B. J. Wentker’s Historic Fine Dining Restaurant was restored in 1999. Behind it stood the Hillside Hotel which is long gone. Wentker’s has a fine display of historic photographs of the Hillside and other historic artifacts. (N42° 40’ 40.2276” W88° 16’ 38.91”)

23. **ST. MARY’S.** At the corner of State and McHenry Streets, there was a knoll, now leveled and paved for a parking lot. On this knoll once stood St. Sebastian’s Catholic Church, the first church building in Burlington. Put up in 1847, this small stone building represented three years of effort by a group of volunteers to dig the stone, hew the timbers, slake the lime, and create the church building. It was demolished in 1965. The parish’s second stone church—the Church of the Immaculate Conception—still stands on McHenry Street. This fieldstone structure, now used as a school, is remarkable for the fact that the foundations, also stone and mortar, go no farther than four or five feet into the ground, yet it stands as solidly now as when it was built. Beginning in 1855, parish members gathered and hauled 10,000 loads of stone in less than four years to build the walls. The church was completed in 1859. The current church, built on the corner in 1891, was restored after a spectacular fire in 1977 gutted it. Go in; admire the Gothic interior. (N42° 40’ 32.9484” W88° 16’ 53.3064”)

24. The **LINCOLN MONUMENT.** Proceeding east (down hill) on State Street will bring you to the Lincoln Monument. On the way, notice the various houses, including the stone houses at 232, 172, 132, and 117. The Lincoln Monument, dedicated in 1913, is unique. It is an original and unduplicated work of the sculptor, George Etienne Ganiere, created in the studios of Lorado Taft in Chicago. It was commissioned by Dr. Francis Meinhardt and given to the city by him. The statue depicts Lincoln giving his second inaugural address. Still valid is Lincoln’s poignant call, “With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in to bind up the nation’s wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan – to do all which may achieve and cherish

a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.” (N42° 40’ 34.3776” W88° 16’ 36.3288”)

25. The **LINCOLN SCHOOL CORNER.** Note the buildings at this intersection. The fine Victorian home on the northwest corner was built by Alois C. Schmitt and his sister, Barbara, in 1906, replacing an earlier residence. The Spanish-style house on the southwest corner was built by George C. Harper, of the Burlington Brass Works, in the mid-1920s. The Lincoln School, opened in 1859, is one of Burlington’s earliest school buildings. When the Civil War began and a call for volunteers went out, all ten boys of Class A enlisted. In the forecourt, a sundial monument was placed by Mrs. Charles Dyer Norton (granddaughter of abolitionists William Lloyd Garrison and James Miller McKim) to honor Dr. Edward Galusha Dyer, Burlington’s first physician and a strong subscriber to Lincoln’s convictions. Dr. Dyer’s house, its site marked by the ship monument across State Street on the former McCanna property, was a station on the “underground railroad.” The former C. Roy McCanna home, built in the 1920s on the southeast corner, has always been one of the most admired residential buildings in the city. In 1976, it became the McCarthy-Koenig Funeral Home; and has been restored to a private residence. East of it stands the home built by Origen Perkins, one of Burlington’s earliest and most influential settlers. The home shows elements of both Greek Revival and Federal styling, with a Georgian influence. Many street names in the area south of here refer to members of his son Frederick Stanton Perkins’ family. (N42° 40’ 35.1012” W88° 16’ 33.8376”)

26. **THE MEINHARDT HOME.** Proceeding south on Kane Street, you will see at 201 S. Kane the former home of the Meinhardt family. The nearest thing to a baronial estate that our city had, the property extended from Kane to Randolph Street and from Chandler Boulevard to past Duane Street. It contained fields and pasture land, an orchard, a tennis court, and a pine grove into which a log cabin had been moved to provide a rustic place for picnics and parties. The cabin now stands in Wehmhoff Square Park. (N42° 40’ 27.4224” W88° 16’ 39.0252”)

27. **EPISCOPAL AND METHODIST CHURCHES.** Chandler Boulevard is the only parkway street in Burlington, and is named for O. W. Chandler, great-grandson of a Revolutionary War officer and grandson of an officer of the War of 1812. The Chandler home is now 149 S. Kane Street. Going east one block on Chandler brings you to Edward Street. Turn left and proceed north. Edward Street joins Perkins Boulevard. In this triangle stands St. John the Divine Episcopal Church, built in 1894 for a congregation that was formed in 1869 of 60 persons in 13 families. It is built of brick from the old Burlington Brick and Tile Co. Stone for the basement came from the quarry at Voree, the former Mormon settlement just west of Burlington. (N42° 40’ 30.1764” W88° 16’ 30.3492”) At the corner of Perkins Boulevard and State Street, a Methodist Church was built in 1904. Although this congregation was begun in 1862, it is interesting to note that a “Rev. Samuel Stebbins, presiding elder of the Milwaukee district, was at the Lower Forks of Fox River (site of Burlington) on Thursday, December 7, 1837.” That was just two years after Moses Smith first set foot in the wilderness here. This building now houses the Center for Arts, Technology, Health & Education, otherwise known as the CATHE Center. (N42° 40’ 33.0168” W88° 16’ 31.4976”)

28. **SILAS PECK HOUSE.** Silas Peck was one of the founders of Burlington. He arrived in 1836, bought the claim of Daniel Rork to the quarter section of land within which you are now standing, built a residence here (117 N. Perkins Blvd.) in 1837, cleared his title at the Milwaukee Land Office in 1839, and proceeded to develop what is now about one fourth of the area of the city. The original part of the house resembled the fieldstone houses you passed on Jefferson Street (#21). Along with other altruistic men of Burlington, Peck was an ardent abolitionist and, according to some reports, used a secret room in the basement to harbor runaway slaves when the house was a stop on the “underground railroad.” The house was extensively remodeled in 1917 by an architect from the Frank Lloyd Wright office. You see the influence in the upper-floor casement windows. The stone walls were covered with glistening crushed granite (now painted). (N42° 40’ 36.588” W88° 16’ 33.5712”)

You will now come to the end of your tour at the Burlington Historical Museum. We hope you have found it enjoyable and informative.

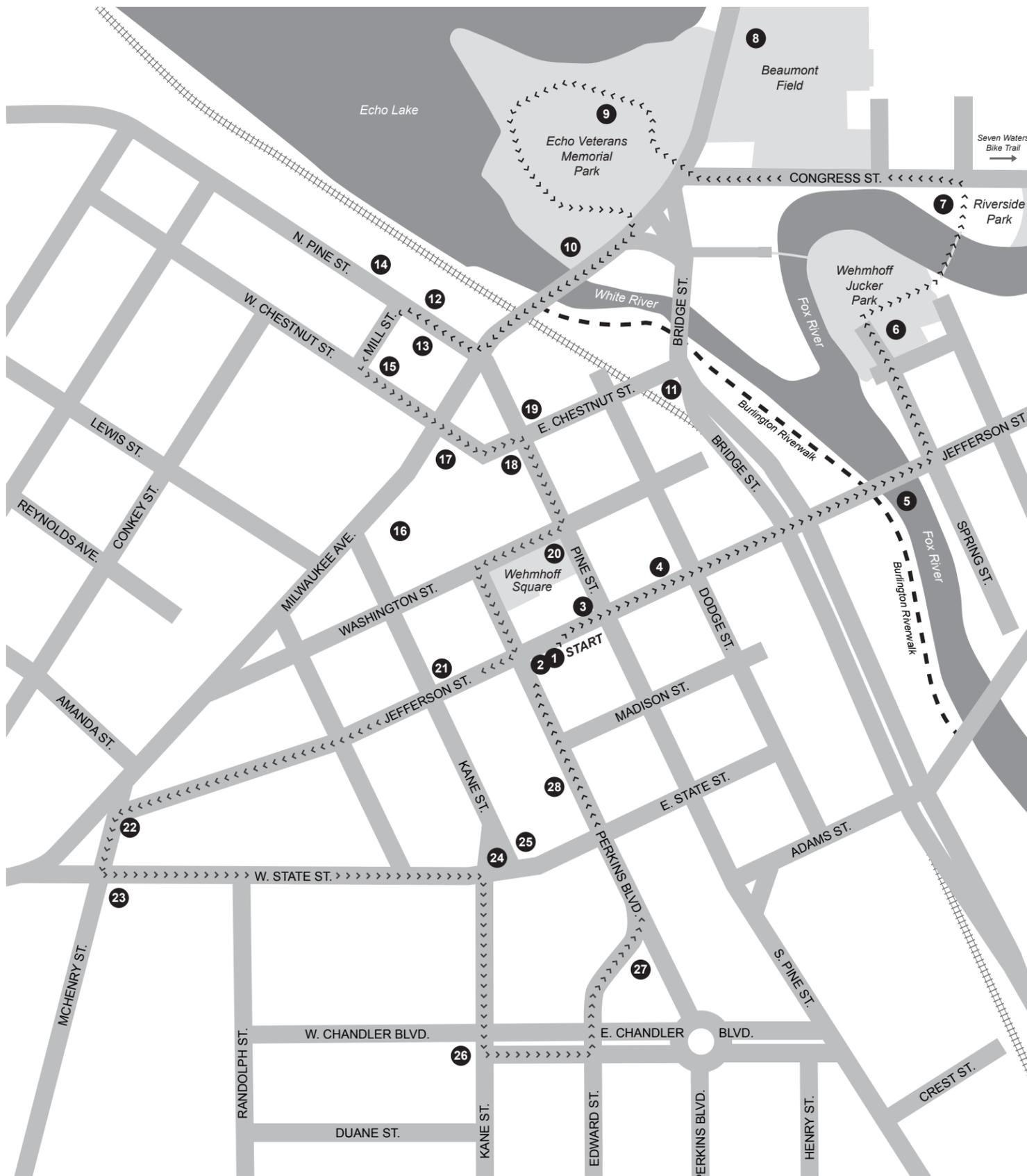
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Original Text by F. C. Meurer

# Historic Burlington



## A Walking Tour



## A Walking Tour of Historic Burlington

**BURLINGTON.** On a cold December day in 1835, Burlington's two first settlers arrived at the forest wilderness where our two rivers join. The following tour will take you to a number of historic spots in the city that developed in the succeeding 180+ years.

1. The **MUSEUM** of the Burlington Historical Society, on the corner of Jefferson Street and Perkins Boulevard, is a fitting place to begin an exploration of historic Burlington. Built in 1883 for the Cross Lutheran congregation, it now contains exhibits of early Burlington, from Indian occupation days to the 1900s. The museum is open most Sunday afternoons from 1 to 4. They can be reached at 262-767-2884 or [burlingtonhistory@gmail.com](mailto:burlingtonhistory@gmail.com). The website address is [www.burlingtonhistory.org](http://www.burlingtonhistory.org). (N42° 40' 40.782" W88° 16' 34.3416")

2. Standing in front of the Museum is the **DYER MONUMENT** dedicated to Dr. Edward G. Dyer, Burlington's first physician, an ardent abolitionist, and "commander-in-chief" of the Underground Railroad in Burlington and vicinity. The monument was created by sculptor Tom Jones, who also created the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery. The Dyer monument was hewn from the same stone as the Tomb. Beside the Museum is the **LEGACY GARDEN** maintained by the Burlington Area Garden Club.

3. The **BURLINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY**, built in 1918 for a federal post office, is one of the most beautiful public buildings in the city. Complete library services are available. During the remodeling, workmen opened up a number of secret stairs and passageways in hollow walls that were used by post office inspectors for surveillance. (N42° 40' 42.816" W88° 16' 33.2364")

4. Continuing east on Jefferson Street, you will pass **CITY HALL** and the **BURLINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT** building. City Hall, built in 1926, houses several city offices. The Police building was dedicated in 1983. A monument on the corner of Jefferson and Dodge Streets honors Burlington police officers who have been killed in the line of duty. (N42° 40' 42.9132" W88° 16' 31.1376")

5. **JEFFERSON STREET BRIDGE.** Continue east on Jefferson Street to the bridge. At this site the first bridge to span the river was built about 1837 to enable grain to be taken from Burlington (then called Foxville) to the docks at Southport (Kenosha). Wheat was the first cash crop our early settlers planted. Looking to the south, you can see what is left of the castle-like building that was the Jacob Muth brewery, later the Finke-Uhen malt house, and now the Haylofters' Malt House Theater. The Haylofters, begun in 1932, is the oldest continuous performing theater group in Wisconsin. Looking to the north, you can see the junction of the White River coming in from the left and the Fox River from the right. At all times of the year (winter included) a great number of semi-wild mallard ducks gather and are fed here. (N42° 40' 45.516" W88° 16' 22.3068")

6. **WEHMHOF-JUCKER PARK.** Across the bridge, the first street to the left will take you to Wehmhoff-Jucker Park. It was in a grove of trees at this river bend that our first settlers, Moses Smith and William Whiting, on December 15, 1835, built a small shanty to shelter themselves while they explored the area looking for farming land and a water power site. The park is extensively used for family picnics. Reservations for group use can be made with City Hall, 262-342-1161. (N42° 40' 53.3424" W88° 16' 19.092")

7. **RIVERSIDE PARK.** Two footbridges cross the Fox River from Wehmhoff-Jucker Park. One, on Wehmhoff-Jucker's west side, leads to the area of Veterans Terrace and Echo Park, which the tour will take you to later. The other, on Wehmhoff-Jucker's north side, leads to Riverside Park, which can also be reserved. A bicycle-hiking trail that follows the route of the electric interurban rail line that extended from Burlington to St. Martins near Milwaukee from 1909 to 1938, starts near Riverside Park. (N42° 41' 15.9288" W88° 15' 45.1548")

8. **BEAUMONT BASEBALL FIELD.** Leaving Riverside Park, go west on Congress Street toward Milwaukee Avenue. To the north you will see a softball field and beyond that a baseball field. The baseball field, called Beaumont Field, was named national field of the year in 2010 by the National High School Baseball Coaches Association. The field is named after Clarence "Ginger" Beaumont, an 11-year major league baseball player with a lifetime .311 batting average, who was the first batter in World Series history. A monument honoring Beaumont is near the grandstand area of the baseball field. Notice that the ballfields are lower than the surrounding areas. This is because a former brick and tile company dug clay from the ballfield area to make its products. (N42° 41' 0.006" W88° 16' 23.4696")

9. **ECHO PARK.** Crossing over Milwaukee Avenue brings you to Echo Veterans Memorial Park. Go first to the dam and stand at the spillway. This dam site is the reason for Burlington's existence. Here, in 1836, Moses Smith built his log-and-boulder dam and on the opposite bank began his sawmill and gristmill for Burlington's first industries. In 1843 another sluice was dug, beginning where you are standing, to guide a flow of water to the

wheels of the Perkins woolen mill located about where the Veterans Terrace now stands. Using wool from surrounding sheep farms, it wove cashmeres, tweeds and flannels of excellent quality. Thousands of yards of woolen cloth came from that mill for the uniforms of Civil War soldiers. The mill was destroyed by fire in 1880. See also the Mormon marker near the river and the monument to Burlington soldiers who gave their lives for their country. (N42° 40' 57.5472" W88° 16' 31.5696")

10. **VETERANS TERRACE.** Adjacent to Echo Park on Milwaukee Avenue is a building honoring the military veterans of Burlington and the surrounding area. A large black granite wall on the north side lists area veterans whose deaths occurred while they were serving their country. The present building resulted from the renovation of the Veterans Memorial Building, which was constructed in the early 1960s and dedicated in 1963. Veterans Terrace, overseen by the non-profit Burlington Community Fund, is used by veteran and other groups for meetings and community activities, banquets, proms, weddings, conferences, trade shows, and service club and other recognition events. (N42° 40' 55.2828" W88° 16' 32.5704")

11. **LION BRAND MILK.** Walking west on Milwaukee Avenue to the south you will see the Charcoal Grill. Across Chestnut Street from the Charcoal Grill is the site of the former Wisconsin Condensed Milk Co., operated by C. B. McCanna and R. G. Frazer. It was an early industry most valuable to the many dairy farmers in the Burlington area. In the early 1900s, Lion Brand condensed milk was sold not only in domestic markets but worldwide. The company was sold to the Nestle Company in 1920 and continued operating into the 1950s. Along the river behind Charcoal Grill is the beautiful riverwalk which will take you down the Fox River and back. Several foot bridges now cross over the Fox River, including the one at Wehmhoff-Jucker Park. The area on the north side of Chestnut Street, where the Charcoal Grill sits, was long occupied by a Can Shop. It was a noisy, clattering factory making cans for the McCanna and later Nestle plants. Cans from the shop would also be loaded into railroad boxcars for use in condenser plants in Valders, Wis., and Pecatonica and Grayslake, Ill. (N42° 40' 54.7644" W88° 16' 32.4192")

12. **ECHO BRAND FLOUR.** Crossing the Milwaukee Avenue bridge and turning right on N. Pine Street brings you to 700 N. Pine St., now an office building, but a most historic Burlington site. Here Moses Smith and Samuel Vaughn constructed a rock-and-log dam and an "up-and-down" sawmill and began a three-run gristmill—two millstones for grinding flour, one for grinding feed. The gristmill was rebuilt and enlarged by Ephraim and Pliny Perkins. From here went the first flour sent East from the Wisconsin Territory. The building you see was built on the foundation of the old mill. You can get a good view of the dam from the building's parking lot. (N42° 40' 52.7772" W88° 16' 39.0828")

13. **FIRST ELECTRIC PLANT.** Directly across the street stands a building that first housed Hubert Wagner's foundry and machine shop. Here in 1888 in an adjacent part, now gone, Burlington's first electric generating plant, steam powered, was installed by Hubert's sons. Here, only 9 years after Edison invented the electric light bulb, two Edison dynamos created electricity to light 27 street lamps, 6 residences, and the Opera House from sundown to 11 p.m. The Opera House, home of the Teutonia Society, stood on the northeast corner of Kane Street and Milwaukee Avenue. When dances were held there, a hat was passed for quarters and dollars to be sent down to the electric plant to coax the operator to run it until 3 a.m. (N42° 40' 50.844" W88° 16' 37.596")

14. The **WATERWORKS.** Adjacent to the 700 N. Pine Street parking lot, you see a building that housed Burlington's original waterworks. In 1889, 69 citizens of the village subscribed \$5,000 to drill a well on this site. An artesian well, its first spontaneous flow was fed into a water trough for horses. "Thus, horses rather than humans became the first regular water consumers of the Burlington Artesian Well and Water Co." (Enoch Squires) The head of the well, now capped, still exists in the basement of the building. Pressure pump, water mains and a water tower completed the \$20,000 system in 1890. Do visit the beautiful old stone water tower, on the knoll at Lewis and James Streets. The building on the corner of N. Pine and Mill Streets, now occupied by an automobile parts business, was previously the F. G. Klein soda pop factory. Klein's Birch Beer, Ginger Ale and Double Cola, all made with Burlington's pure, clear artesian well water, refreshed the taste of the youngsters as the Finke-Uhen beer did their fathers'. (N42° 40' 52.2084" W88° 16' 40.0692")

15. Walking south toward the **DOWNTOWN** on Chestnut Street you see, at the corner of Mill and Chestnut Streets, a building that formerly housed Hansen's Gasoline Station (no longer operating). In 1911, the Hansen Oil Company started a bulk oil business in Burlington. In 1926